

**Remarks Prior to a Briefing From Federal Emergency Management Agency  
Administrator Deanne Bennett Criswell, Homeland Security, and COVID-19  
Response Teams**

*August 10, 2021*

*The President.* Hey, folks. I'll make a brief opening statement here. I want to thank you, Administrator Criswell, for the job you've been doing and outstanding work helping our country navigate what is overlapping challenges we've been facing. And you've been very busy.

We've got wildfires in the West. We've got—approaching the peak of Atlantic hurricane season. All across the country, the Delta variant is spreading, as Dr. Fauci and others can tell you, and it's spreading rapidly—rapidly among the unvaccinated. When these crises intersect, they compound one another—natural disasters and the Delta variant.

And that's what we're going to be discussing today with the group I've assembled here. We need to be ready to manage our natural disasters caused by hurricanes hitting the Southeast and the environment and with a broad community spread of COVID-19. And the best thing we can do is—to prepare for that is to—for everyone who is not vaccinated—I know it's a broken record, and I keep saying it—but to get vaccinated.

With the Delta variant, we're seeing a pandemic of the unvaccinated. Cases and hospitalizations are rising faster in States with low vaccination rates, such as Florida, Texas, Louisiana, Alabama, and Mississippi, which are the States that—from a hurricane-prone—they're the States that are most at risk.

And so we don't wait until it's too late. And if God forbid, a natural disaster strikes, we have to make sure we're ready to be protected against COVID-19 as well.

Let me be clear: If you're in a State where hurricanes often strike—like Florida or the Gulf Coast or into Texas—a vital part of preparing for hurricane season is to get vaccinated now. Everything is more complicated if you're not vaccinated and a hurricane or a natural disaster hits.

If you wind up having to evacuate, if you wind up having to stay in a shelter, you don't want to add COVID-19 to the list of dangers that you're going to be confronting. Get vaccinated now so you're ready for whatever may come this month. And it's likely some serious hurricanes are going to come this month.

So go to [ready.gov](https://ready.gov) to make sure that you're prepared with the hurricane—with a hurricane plan. Know your evacuation zones. Have a plan with your family. And get your emergency supplies and a go-bag ready, and don't forget to pack one for your pets as well. I mean that seriously.

And if you've got older neighbors or people in your community who might need your help, check in to see if you can help them make a plan as well.

And the bottom line is this: The more we do to prepare, the better off we are when disaster strikes. We can't prevent hurricanes making landfall, but we can prevent people from getting seriously sick and dying from COVID-19. Get vaccinated and make a plan.

Thank you all. That's what we're going to discuss in some detail today with my team. Thank you all very much.

*Q.* Sir, your message to—[inaudible]?

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:46 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Director and Chief Medical Adviser to the President Anthony S. Fauci. Also participating in the briefing were COVID–19 Response Coordinator Jeffrey D. Zients and Deputy Coordinator Natalie Quillian; Homeland Security Adviser Elizabeth D. Sherwood-Randall; Special Assistant to the President and National Security Council Senior Director for Resilience and Response Caitlin Durkovich; COVID–19 Response Supply Coordinator Tim Manning; and Director of Intergovernmental Affairs Julie Chavez Rodriguez.

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